



# Newsletter

European IFYE Alumni

December 2015



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# Greetings from the Board

Hi all,

It has been a fall when I thought a lot about what it mean to be an IFYE. In Sweden, as in other parts of Europe are increasing xenophobia. IFYE movement started to prevent just that and now it's more important than ever that we IFYEs stand up for the human rights. I want to believe that we all because of standing by strangers at our exchanges got a better understanding of other cultures. The strangers we met became our IFYE families. Now we can in our own countries take chances to get to know people from other cultures. Do it, think of all those who opened up their home to you and provide refugees the same opportunity.

I just returned home from a fantastic IFYE wedding party in Northern Ireland, a friendship that started on an IFYE conference in Thailand and it means a lot to me to see all the love. It gives me hope. So take the chance, open up your heart in Christmas, invite and make new friends. You may be ending up at a wedding :-)



Your president,

Anna Persson (IFYE to Scotland 1991)



The board wishes you all Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



The year passed very quick and many things happened. Good and unfortunately also many bad things in the world. Just recently I was able to welcome IFYEs at my home. It is always a pleasure to see old and new friends again and as Anna already wrote, it is great that we have learned how to welcome «foreigners» but it is even nicer, when they become friends.

Furthermore, I would like to say thanks for all numerous contributions to the Newsletter. Whenever an idea for a story or something similar pops-up in your mind, please send me a mail and I will fit it in the next possible Newsletter.



Your newsletter editor,

Anita Eckerstorfer (IFYE to Scotland 2007)

European IFYE Alumni Association

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Deadline next issue:

10. February 2016

# European IFYE Conference in Estonia (23.-30.7.2016)

The 58th of European IFYE conference takes place 23rd – 30th of July 2016 in Estonia. So that's why you should know some facts about Estonia:

- Estonia has a population of just 1.3 million but Estonia is small, but it isn't the smallest country in Europe. It's bigger than Slovenia, Holland, Denmark, and Switzerland. It's about the same size as New Hampshire and Massachusetts combined.
- Finland is a short hop across the sea – just 80 km away. There are ferries to Tallinn from Helsinki (Finland) or Stockholm (Sweden).
- Brits, Americans, Canadians and Australians can also enter Estonia visa-free.
- The Estonian language is a finno-ugric language - resembles most to Finnish and is different from Latvian and Russian language.
- Estonia was occupied by the Soviets for decades but Estonia sees itself as more influenced by Nordic tastes and traditions - Scandinavia with a twist.
- Great food is everywhere and you can even eat marinated bear here!
- In winter it gets very cold and we get plenty of beautiful snow. No, there are no polar bears in Estonia.
- NB! Reflectors are mandatory for pedestrians and cyclists at all times!
- Estonia is almost 50% forest.
- Estonia has over 1,500 islands.
- Suur Munamägi, at a measly 318 meters (about 1,000 feet), is the tallest mountain in the country – and every Estonian talks proudly about this mountain.



More info about conference is in page <http://ifye2016.wix.com/ifye2016>.

See you in Estonia 2016!

Reelika Rüütli  
Estonian 4H IFYE coordinator

# One summer to find out what IFYE is about

written by Johannes Huber (Switzerland) – IFYE to Austria 2015

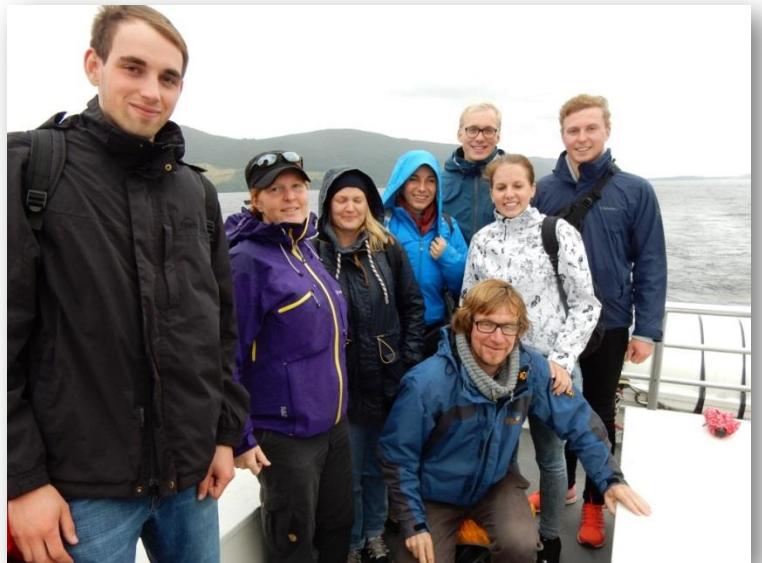
I need to start telling this story fourteen years ago when I was six years old. Back then my family in Switzerland used to be an IFYE host family as we are still today. We once hosted an IFYE from Montana, USA at home for three weeks. The time with this IFYE was just unforgettable. We talked about her frequently the following years but somehow we lost contact after a few years. The story continues when we hosted another IFYE from USA but this time from Kansas three years ago. We also had a great time with her and we are still in contact now.

The latest part of the story was written this summer. After finishing my mandatory army service in Switzerland I decided to see the world. Especially USA was one of the destinations I wanted to see since long. So USA was set as the destination. But where to go and what to do? After a few minutes of thinking I remembered the two IFYEs we used to host. Without any hopes that the email address of the one in Montana was still correct I decided to write an email to her. After a few days I got an answer and I went to Montana for three weeks to visit her and her family one month later. In total I went to the USA on a private way (not as an IFYE) for nine weeks and I spent three weeks with an IFYE in Montana and three weeks with another one in Kansas. I had not enough of IFYE after this very nice experience and realizing what it means to be part of the IFYE family. So I decided very shortly to become an IFYE as well. After nine weeks staying in the USA I flew home for four days.

After this very short break back home I left again and went to Austria for my exchange. I stayed in Austria for six weeks with five families and I got the chance to see nearly the whole country from east to west. Also if it might sound a little bit boring to go to an exchange to the neighbour country it was one of the best experiences I have ever made. I realized that people and culture can be so different within a few hundred kilometers. I saw a lot of different ways of life and different opinions about things and topics I would never see in my home country just because these two countries are so different. I met a lot of nice people from young to old with whom I am sure I will stay in contact for the rest of my life.



When I was at the general assembly of the Swiss IFYE Club I met some people who said that they will go to Scotland to such a conference. Of course I had no idea what it was but I decided to go with them because it sounded like fun. So after finishing my exchange in Austria I bought an Interrail ticket and I made all my way up from Austria straight to Glasgow. In Glasgow I met the IFYE I have visited in Kansas and another IFYE from Switzerland. After travelling through Scotland for five days we arrived at the European IFYE Conference in Gordonstoun. At the conference I had one of the best weeks I ever spent in connection with IFYE. I met a lot of people from different parts of the world and I realized that being an IFYE doesn't only mean "going abroad for an exchange" it also means to become a different person and part of a great "society". This society is what I guess everyone in this world would like to be part of. You can start talking to who ever you want to and be sure that you will have a nice discussion, open up your mind, learn something about farming in other parts of the world and get some good ideas and impressions for your future life just by talking to them.



But this is not the end of the story. This autumn my family will host two IFYEs from USA and I am looking forward to them even more than ever before because since I became an IFYE as well I know a lot more about how it is to be one, how it feels and what IFYEs like to do and to see.

I spent my whole summer 2015 with being part of IFYE. Since this adventure started I was often thinking about how to describe these four letters – I – F – Y – E – that no knows what it means but only the ones who are part of it.

*It's a family. It's a virus. It's a way of life. It's a way of character. It's a passion.*

*It is I – F – Y – E.*

Pictures and Text © by Johannes Huber

# An IFYE Exchange on Two Wheels

«Riding on a bicycle after the Conference from Scotland to Switzerland – how did you come up with this idea? »

Many conference participants asked me that question. The answer was so easy: Because I want to, and because I have a lot of time.



with Barbara in Scotland

The first two weeks of the long trip, I had the company of my Swiss friend Barbara. We enjoyed riding through the north western part of Scotland. The first few days, we ran into other IFYEs almost round every corner – many of us were enjoying some travelling days after the Conference. The ferry brought us to the Outer Hebrides, where we got in contact with some new Scottish friends: the Midges, however after only two days they became bored and left us – we did not mind at all! But now, strong headwinds wanted to test us. It needed quite some power, to bike further south. Lucky for us Niklaus, the young Swiss IFYE who was travelling around Europe in his old yellow campervan, showed up! After a nice dinner in Lochmaddy, the deal was set: We would load our bikes into his van the next day and join him on his way south. Easy and relaxed we arrived on the Isle of Barra and headed up north on our bikes the next day, with the wind on our backs – Lochmaddy was reached after only few hours.



with Barbara in Scotland



With Alan on Skye

Next morning, after a ferry ride, we arrived on the Isle of Skye, where we met the most famous IFYE host: Alan Duncan! He had so many IFYE visitors before and after the Conference but was still very happy to welcome us. Thanks Alan! A few days later, it was already time for Barbara to fly back to Switzerland and I looked at the map of Europe, to make further plans. Whilst at home, I had the idea to make a stop in Edinburgh and then ride down the East Coast of England. However, at the Conference I had so many invitations from IFYEs in the western part of the British Isles – I really had to change plans...

Mary Turner was my guide for almost a whole week. She loves cycling and the Isle of Islay and enjoyed showing me around that special place. Perfect weather, good company, nice landscapes – what else shall I wish for? Nothing! Thank you so much Mary!



With Mary on Islay



Dessert-Party with the Northern Irish Crew

From the Isle of Islay, Northern Ireland was just a stone's throw away. Thanks Linda that you have motivated me to come to your country! I not only enjoyed the beautiful bike rides, no – most of all the perfect hospitality of so many IFYEs. It felt like a short term IFYE exchange programme. Thanks for teaching and showing me many interesting things. I'm already looking forward to going back to Northern Ireland in 2018 for the Conference!

Lucky me, there are ferries from Belfast to Douglas on the Isle of Man, home of other good IFYE friends. Yes, I have taken the opportunity and made a stop there as well. Angela offered me a bed, Martyn proved us he is a good cook and Gill showed me the southern part of the isle while I cycled through the northern part the day after. Big thanks to my Many friends!

Still in the west of the British Isles, it was so easy to make further plans: Wales was awaiting us with hilly routes and the best coffee places along the whole trip. Well, maybe I only made more coffee stops because of the weather... but after two rainy days, the sunny weather was back again. However, the visits to all the IFYE friends in Wales had to be earned - there were a few hundred miles and a lot of altitude to overcome, until I visited all of them. But the big smile of Donald Spencer (88), the oldest participant at the Conference, made me forget my efforts! Two «Future Farmers of America» met for tea - he was in 1950 in the US, I 40 years later. IFYE connects!



Lighthouse in the North of the Isle of Man



Coffee & Cake in Wales



Teatime with Donald

After some cycling days in England, I finally took the train through London to the English East Coast to take the ferry to Holland – the cyclist's paradise. Nice cycling routes along the coast, perfect weather – only the headwind was not on my wish list. But already after six weeks cycling, I had enough power in my legs to reach Amsterdam anyway. Then I was heading south towards Switzerland. But still not stressed, I took some time to visit the Dutch IFYEs. They are so sporty – all of them joined me for some kilometres on my route. Arriving in Germany, I noticed that in only one week, I should arrive home to start work! No more time left to make any extra loops – I followed the River Rhine straight down. Lucky me, three more IFYE visits were possible, before I crossed the Swiss border and the first Swiss mountain range after 8 weeks.

What a great time! Alan was so right, when he told me:

**«Life is not about the journey, it's about the friends you meet on the way and the adventures you have together».**



Cycling with Ad and Lucie in Holland



With Iny in Holland

#### Trip from Scotland to Switzerland:

- 3378 Kilometers / 2100 Miles
- (from Gordenstoun to Hondrich)
- 56 days
- 24 visits of friends along the route (18 IFYEs)
- 2 flat tyres (both in Scotland)
- 6 hitchhiking rides
- 3 train rides
- 19 ferry rides

**Karin Jakob**

ka.jakob (AT) bluewin.ch

IFYE to USA 1990 / Costa Rica 1996

# European IFYE's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary project

Early in November the preparatory work for the 60th Anniversary commemoration project moved to Switzerland. There a "working party" of Katharina, Hans, Eva and me sorted through all the archive documents that are stored in the attic of Marianne Gfeller's farmhouse.

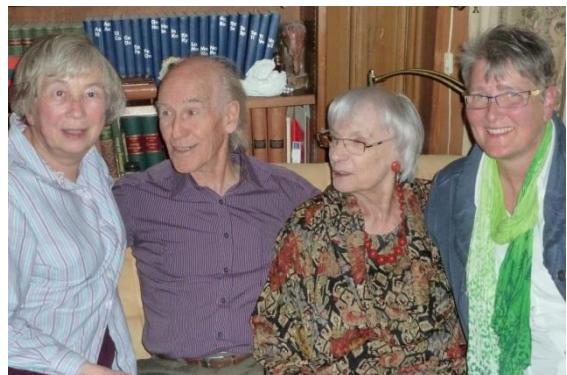


There was obviously a good deal of paper to go through. However, the work was made considerably easier by the advance thinking of Hans who had hired a large scanner able to cope with old-fashioned paper sizes. The end result was that we found some information from every one of our meetings since 1958. Also, all the archive papers are now stored on the computer. Despite that, there is still a great deal more to be done to ensure those papers, rather than being just a collection of old documents, are organised so that they tell the IFYE story.



This report of our progress would not be complete without a very big thank you to Hans and his wife, Elisabeth, for the hospitality they provided by putting their apartment, with wonderful views across the Thunersee towards the Alps, at our disposal.

On the Saturday of our weekend there we were able to visit Rudi and Vreny Mummenthaler and were joined by Therese Aellen. Rudi was our 2nd European President and organised the 1st World Conference. The success of that provided one of the foundation stones for everything European IFYE has achieved since. Rudi is now 90 years old and Vreny 88 but both were in fine form. We enjoyed a very special gemütlich IFYE get-together with them. Then, that evening, Dory Wymann and Dora Andres joined us at Hans' apartment and Dory cooked a fondue for us. So, again, we had a special IFYE get together – and enjoyed some Swiss wine.



Meanwhile some of the Swedish IFYEs have held a meeting at the home of Helena and Lennart Linqvist to generate some ideas for the brochure we are hoping to produce. Their work has provided some valuable input.

All in all, the work we have done so far has reminded us of how lucky we are to be IFYEs and to be able to share so many happy experiences and memories. The sub-committee's task is now to try to crystallize those experiences and memories, both in the on-line record and the brochure we produce, into the wonderful story that is the European IFYE Alumni.

Dorothy Wilson (IFYE to USA 1967)

## **Does anyone know when and where this picture was taken?**

The 60-year's anniversary team needs your help. They think it was at the only conference in Ireland 1961,  
please confirm or let them know if different.

Please send a mail to: Katharina Steinrücke  
ifyekatharina (AT) t-online.de



## **Invitation to Swiss Ski Weekend**



**swiss iFYE winterweekend**  
**08.-10.01.2016**

**Klewenalp NW**

More information: <http://www.ifye.ch/view/agenda>  
or: zuberei (AT) bluewin.ch

The ski weekend takes place every year around the same date. Maybe it is too late for this year but save the date already for next year's «Schneiplausch»!

# German IFYE Autumn Reunion 2015

written by Felix Tremöhlen, Germany - IFYE to USA 2013

This year's autumn reunion of the German IFYE Association took place in the Swabian Mountains Area in Southern Germany from the 23rd to the 25th of October. Most of the about 40 IFYEs attending the reunion arrived at the hotel close to Münsingen on Friday night and so already had time to talk to old and new friends.



We spent the Saturday visiting some interesting places in the area. In the morning we visited a cooperation growing organic lentils. Later we saw the beautiful historic church of the Monastery Zwiefalten and then went to have a typical regional meal with lamb meat for lunch at a sheep farm in the Swabian Mountains. From the farm we started a guided hiking tour through a former military training area on which we learned more about the area's nature and history and could enjoy the great sunny weather. The day ended with dinner and sitting together at the hotel.



Since they had long ways home a lot of the participants already left on Sunday morning. Others took the chance to see the famous 'Blautopf' in Blaubeuren, a small lake with extremely blue water which inspired a lot of legends and fairytales, before heading home.

A big 'thank you' to Eva Singer for organizing this great weekend!

## Family Spencer – IFYE's in three generations

There are several great things, which could be mentioned about family Spencer from Wales, but at least one is very special in the light of IFYE. 3 generations of IFYE in one family and the 2<sup>nd</sup> is even an IFYE couple. Alison is originally from Scotland. Yes... IFYE spirit is in the house ☺. Please enjoy reading their stories regarding their IFYE life and experiences. It is interesting to see which things changed over time and which ones are still the same.



Name	Exchange Country	Exchange year	Length of stay	Mode of transport
Donald	USA (Kentucky)	1950	3 months	sea voyage
Keith	Finland	1976	5 weeks	russian boat
Alison	Ontario, Canada	1980	3 months	plane
Andrew	India	2015	2 weeks	plane



## 1. How did you come across IFYE and/or what convinced you to go on exchange as an IFYE?

Donald	My exchange visit was before IFYE was formed.
Keith	I was encouraged to apply for an exchange by one of my fellow Young Farmers Club members who had been to New Zealand. I was first introduced to Young Farmers Ambassadors (YFA) the organization for UK Young Farmers Club members who have been on exchange trips and attended the UK reunion at Pitlochry Scotland in 1977. From there I became aware of the European IFYE reunion and attended my first one at Aberdeen in 1982.
Alison	My first experience of IFYE was as a committee member for the 1982 conference in Aberdeen. I have many happy memories of Willie Marwick leading planning meetings in the 'wee' small hours with everyone in their Pyjamas !
Andrew	Both my parents and my grandad had already been on exchanges before I went. However it wasn't really until I helped host an IFYE conference and spoke to other exchangees about their experiences that I was convinced to apply for a trip myself

## 2. What was the reason for choosing your exchange country?

Donald	I was offered the opportunity to go to the USA. By the England and Wales Federation of Young Farmers Clubs, as part of a number of exchange visits that year.
Keith	I actually applied to go to the USA on a 3 month trip but at my area interview it was suggested that I did not have enough experience to be successful at the final national interview so I was put forward for the trip to Finland instead. I was selected and then appointed leader of an 8 strong group.
Alison	As a teacher time off was limited so the longest leave of absence I could get was for three months. I wanted to do a longer exchange and my two favourites were New Zealand and Canada and luck me got Canada.
Andrew	My exchange offerered me the chance to help in a community that was less economically developed than my own. The programme alllowed me to help the local school and community which was something that inspired me. India was also a country I had always wanted to go to due to its vastly different culture.

### 3. What was your biggest IFYE highlight after your exchange?

Donald	Attending the National Convention of the Future Farmers of America as an overseas visitor, where thousands of members and their leaders gather each year.
Keith	My first reunion at Aberdeen 7 days without sleep and where I met Alison, but more recently helping to organize the first and best ever reunion in Wales.
Alison	I really should say meeting my hubby at an IFYE Conference, but think my exchange changed my attitude to life. Going on an exchange opened my eyes to the wonderful world there is out there, and made me want to get a greater experience of life in other lands by meeting like minded people who were eager to welcome you to their Country and home and share their local culture and customs with you. .
Andrew	The highlight for me has to be the people I met in the village. They were so warm and welcoming and had a great spirit throughout the trip. They have become friends and have invited us all back in the future.



Donald



Keith

### 4. How did the IFYE spirit influence your family life?

Donald	The sense of learning and cooperation with people from all walks of life.
Keith	It fuelled my love of travelling, visiting new places and meeting new people but also allowed us to make long lasting friendships with people from all over the world who we can meet every year.
Alison	It has given us friends and contacts all over the World, and we are so lucky to continue exploring new places and try new things. I think all IFYE's are lifelong learners.
Andrew	The trip has taught me to be more grateful for what I have and to make the most of every opportunity. It also taught me about the joy of having a close community around you.

## 5. What was your most impressive story/situation from your exchange?

Donald

Bearing in mind that it is 65 years since my visit and no doubt many changes will have taken place since 1950. One of my lasting impressions of living with members and their families in the State of Kentucky, was the wide difference of homes, from the primitive wooden bungalows to substantial farm houses with all the up to date equipment of the time. Wherever I stayed, I was made most welcome and the hospitality was magnificent. Living and working as a member of the family, made me realize how hard they worked, much of it by hand in those days, but still enjoyed their leisure time. They worked hard and played hard!

Keith

Experiencing family life on a small farm near Lovisa in southern Finland. All very laid back with a slow pace of life. Highlights included hay making with hauling of the bales made much easier by their small size (c. 10kgs.), painting the barn and replacing the flagpole.

The sauna of course was a new experience! Especially at a summerhouse overnight party by a lake in the forest in midsummer with plenty of alcohol. Clothes soon became optional!

Discovered Korskenkorva and several other Finnish drinks that I couldn't spell or pronounce even before I sampled them.

Played football for the local team under a false name as I wasn't registered to play for them. Lost 8-1. Nobody complained.

Nearly burnt the village hall down by setting the formica worktop on fire when preparing for the farewell/thank you party!



Alison



Andrew

## 5. What was your most impressive story/situation from your exchange?

My highlights - way too many to report!!!!

- The happy, enthusiastic, friendly people who offered me amazing hospitality and made me feel so welcome
- An entire Baseball team turning up to welcome me and whisking me off to a drive in movie on the back of a truck with ten crates of Labatts Blu lager does wonders for a girl's confidence. (P.S. I don't remember the film !)
- A rather dish host ( called Randy - of course) setting me the task of chasing 100 piglets around a yard and catching them for injection. I needed more than a shower after that!
- Crop tours in the middle of the night - no more said. what goes on tour stays on tour.
- The long distances between host families - one was a nine hour train ride, followed by an hour and a half flight.
- Flying to Calgary through a thunder and lightning storm.
- Being overawed by the beauty of the Banff-Jasper National Park. Rugged, angular mountains, icy-cold waterfalls, peaceful true-blue lakes, hot bubbling sulphur springs, the quiet beauty of Lake Louise to the stunning mountain top views with houses nestling between trees and water. I felt like a pioneer as I travelled with fellow exchangees in a mini bus marvelling at the splendour all around us and spending nights in log cabins sheltering from the wild bears and wolves which were roaming freely around the park.
- A trip of a lifetime, no doubt about that.

Alison

There were many amazing stories to tell based upon where we went or the reasons behind them. Visiting the Taj Mahal was an incredible experience and is a place I believe everyone should visit at some point. A visit to a variety of temples where the tranquility offers an amazing contrast to the rush and chaos that is normal Indian life. There's also the story of how we failed to milk the buffalo on our first morning. The leader of our household didn't speak English and so instead of taking us to the where the buffalo were kept he took us on a 2 hour hike to have a morning cup of tea at a shop in a village about 4 miles down the road. The best day of my exchange however has to be the trip to the Amber Fort near Jaipur. The fort which was built in 1592 was incredible in size with the sandstone walls stretching out for miles over the hillside. Whilst inside the fort were many buildings which had been decorated with intricate bejewelled designs including a marble dancefloor. The fort had also many exquisite gardens and had been designed for the Maharaja and separated into public areas and private family areas. The peaceful fort gave an amazing view of Maota Lake and of the bustling city of Jaipur. There was so much to see at the fort we could have spent far longer there if the time had been available and I'd recommend it to everyone.

Andrew

# Congratulations to



## Laura Sartamo + Simon Garlough

*Laura from Finland, IFYE to Switzerland 2008*

*Simon from Canada, IFYE to Switzerland 2008*

Thee wedding took place in Finland, October 30th.



## Sam Hawkes + Adrian Steele

*Sam from Northern Ireland, IFYE to Australia 1995*

The edging took place on Friday 6th Nov in Capetown , South Africa, with a wedding celebration dinner and a party in Northern Ireland on Friday 4th Dec with family, friends and fellow IFYE friends...